

Trading bullets for batteries



Servicemembers showcase their skills on the Engagement Skills Trainer 2000 at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, July 24. The EST 2000 is a training system used by the military to train servicemembers in the use of every weapon in its arsenal without wasting valuable ammunition.

EST 2000 helps servicemembers plug in to simulated combat

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"Nothing compares to actual combat, the heat, dehydration, lack of sleep, being cooped up together and the threat of IEDs," said Sgt. 1st Class Dwayne Conkle, an EST 2000 instructor and a native of Colorado Springs, Co.

No amount of training can replace real life experience, but thanks to the technology of the Engagement Skills Trainer 2000, servicemembers can get as close as it comes to the real thing.

"If you treat it like it is real you will react and get an adrenaline rush as if it is really happening," Conkle said.

The EST 2000 displays various scenarios on three large screens which

servicemembers react to according to unit standard operating procedures.

Camp Buehring, Kuwait, houses an EST 2000 to keep servicemembers up to speed on skills necessary for the success of war fighters in a combat environment.

Anywhere from 100 to 310 servicemembers use the EST 2000 each day. Ten Soldiers can participate in the training at a time with five in each lane, Conkle said.

The EST 2000 offers marksmanship training on every small arms, crew served and individual anti-tank weapon in the military's arsenal from the MK-19 to the M-9, said Bruner Caudill, the Computer Sciences Corporation senior training facilitator from Grafenwoehr, Germany.

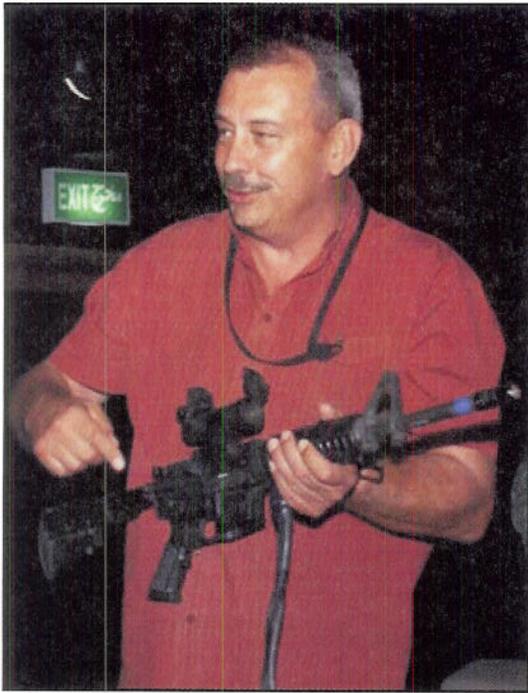
Marksmanship training on the EST

2000 saves valuable ammunition needed on the battlefield as well as costs of operating ranges.

The EST 2000 can also simulate real world situations. Attacks by insurgents using improvised explosive devices and an attack in a marketplace with small-arms fire are some of the scenarios featured among others.

The weapons kick and the sound of gunfire give the simulation a feel of really firing the weapon. The screen shows the insurgents moving into position and firing from windows and rooftops driving home the thought that they are a direct threat that must be neutralized.

Units passing through Camp Buehring for training prior to entering Iraq can use the EST 2000 to train as a team in a real-world environment, Conkle said. Team-



Senior training facilitator in Grafenwoehr, Germany instructs servicemembers on how the Engagement Skills Trainer works at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, July 24.

work and unity can keep servicemembers alive by building trust between them. For a servicemember, being able to rely on team members can mean the difference between victory and defeat and save lives on the battlefield.

“They show a vast improvement from the first round to the third iteration,” Conkle said.

After the simulation ends the EST 2000 has the capability to replay and show the servicemembers where their rounds landed, how many rounds were fired and how many were lethal. This option allows servicemembers to evaluate whether or not they covered their own sector of fire and opens their eyes to basic information that warriors on the battlefield should know, Caudill said.

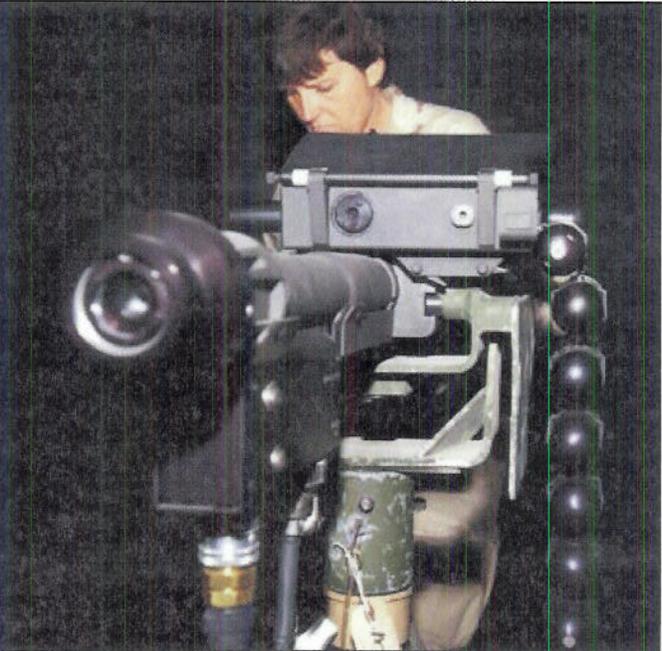
Caudill said he hopes troops carry the skills they acquire or reinforce with the EST 2000 into actual combat in Iraq.

“I hope if anything else they can remember back to what they did in the EST 2000,” he said.

The EST 2000 keeps servicemembers up to speed on their training and keeps bullets in their magazines. The presence of an EST 2000 in Kuwait ensures that servicemembers can get top-notch training even while deployed. **A**



The Engagement Skills Trainer 2000 can train ten servicemembers at a time with five in each lane. The kick of the weapons and the simulated back blast of the AT-4 add realism to the experience of the EST 2000.



The MK-19 automatic grenade launcher is one of the weapons available for use with the Engagement Skills Trainer 2000.